

## LECTURE 1: AN OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

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|---|----|
| I. Why Do We Call It the <i>Old Testament</i> ?                                   | 1  |
| A. God Has Spoken Understandably in History                                       | 1  |
| B. God Has Spoken Understandably in History <i>through</i> Covenant               | 2  |
| C. Implications of the bible Being Covenantal Revelation                          | 3  |
| D. Summary  | 5  |
| II. Why Do We Call It the <i>Old</i> Testament?                                   | 5  |
| A. Initial Ponderings?  | 5  |
| B. Biblical Reflections   | 5  |
| C. The Old Testament's <i>Foundational Role</i> in Scripture                      | 6  |
| D. The <i>Old</i> Testament's Fulfillment in the New Testament                    | 8  |
| E. Summary  | 8  |
| III. The Old Testament's Rootedness in History                                    | 9  |
| A. Human Authors  | 9  |
| B. Historical-Geographical Context  | 9  |
| IV. The Bible's Storyline: God's Kingdom through Covenant for His Glory in Christ | 16 |
| A. The 7 Stages of God's KINGDOM-Building Plan                                    | 16 |
| B. Jesus's Saving Work as the Fulcrum of the Bible                                | 16 |
| V. The Arrangement of Jesus's Bible   | 17 |
| A. The Structure  | 17 |
| B. The Significance   | 19 |
| VI. The Bible's Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum: a New Testament Perspective      | 20 |
| A. Definitions  | 20 |
| B. Jesus's Perspective on the Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum                     | 20 |
| C. Paul and Peter's Perspective on the Frame, Form, Focus, and Fulcrum            | 22 |

### I. Why Do We Call It the Old TESTAMENT?

#### A. God has spoken understandably in history (Scripture as revelation).

1. *Revelation*: God's disclosure of himself and his will in a way we can understand
  - 1 Cor. 14:37. The things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.
  - 2 Tim. 3:16-17. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable....
  - 2 Pet. 1:20-21. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was every made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.
2. The Bible's very words and not just its ideas are God-inspired.
  - 2 Tim. 3:16-17. *All Scripture* is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.
  - Matt. 5:17-18. Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *not an iota, not a dot*, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
  - 1 Cor. 2:13. And we impart this *in words* not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.
3. Revelation implies inerrancy of every part within the original autographs.
  - Psa. 12:6. The words of the LORD are *pure* words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

- Psa. 119:142. Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is *true*.
- Psa. 119:160. The sum of your word is *truth*, and every one of your righteous rules *endures forever*.
- Psa. 119:172. My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are *right*.

**B. God has spoken understandably in history *through covenant* (Scripture as *covenantal revelation*).**

1. *Covenant*: An elected relationship of obligation established under oath and divine sanction.
  - a. *Relationship*: Big King enters into a relationship with a little king
  - b. *Elected*: Relationship is secured through the choice of both parties
  - c. *Obligation*: Big King promises *provision* and *protection*; little king vows loyalty
  - d. *Oath*: A vow the lesser or greater party makes to the other
  - e. *Divine Sanction*: Blessings and curses
2. The Bible as Covenantal Literature:
  - a. God chose to reveal himself through international covenant administration; the Bible is created in the context of covenant.
    - i. The *Ten Words* are the first authoritative/covenantal text mentioned in the Bible (Exod 20:1–17).
      - Exod. 34:28. And [Yahweh] wrote on the tablets *the words of the covenant*, the Ten Commandments.
      - Deut. 9:9, 11, 15. When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, *the tablets of the covenant* that Yahweh made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.... And at the end of forty days and forty nights Yahweh gave me the two tablets of stone, *the tablets of the covenant*.... So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire. And the two *tablets of the covenant* were in my two hands.
      - Cf. Deut 4:13; 1 Kgs 8:9; 2 Chr 5:10; Heb 9:4
    - ii. The Ten Words of the “covenant” are placed in the “Ark of the Covenant” (Exod 25:16); added instruction is specified as “covenantal” (34:27–28) and some is termed the “Book of the Covenant” (24:27; cf. 20:22–23:33)
    - iii. Sometime afterward the narrative portions and other legislation of Genesis–Numbers were added (cf. Exod 17:14; Num 21:14; 33:2; also Josh 10:13), along with Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 28:58; 29:20, 21, 27; 30:10; 31:9, 19, 22, 24; Josh 1:8).
    - iv. All the Bible grows out of Israel’s covenant with God and must be read in this light.
  - b. Yahweh is the ultimate Great King.
    - Secular use of the title: 2 Kgs. 18:19. Then Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, ‘What is this confidence that you have?’”
    - Ps. 48:2. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the *great King*.
    - Ps. 95:3. For Yahweh is a great God and a *great King* above all gods.
    - Mal. 1:14. “I am a *great King*,” says Yahweh of hosts, “and my name is feared among the nations.” (cf. Ps 47:2)

- Matt. 5:34–35. But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the *great King*.”
- c. As the Great King, Yahweh gives a covenant document to his covenant partner and commissions prophets as covenant enforcers
  - Deut. 18:18. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.
  - Jer. 23:22. But if they had stood in my council, then they would have announced my words to my people.
  - Mal. 3:1. Behold, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple, and *the messenger of the covenant*, in whom you delight, behold, he is coming.
- d. God rules his kingdom through Messiah Jesus
  - i. Jesus is the “King of the Jews” (Matt 1:1; 2:2), proclaims the “good news of the kingdom” (4:17), calls us to pray for God’s kingdom to come (6:10), declares that we must seek his kingdom (6:33), and ultimately is established as the *king over all* (28:18).
  - ii. Jesus’ final words instilled hope for the consummation of God’s kingdom (Acts 1:3), and the NT is kingdom preaching centered on Christ (see 28:30–31).
- 3. Covenant assumes canon.
  - a. Canon: Standard of measurement/authority.
  - b. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the authoritative guide for humans with respect to faith and practice.
    - Gal. 6:16. And as for all who walk by this rule (*kanon*), peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.
    - Council of Laodicea in AD 363 (Schaff-Herzog, I, 385). No psalms of private authorship can be read in the churches, nor *uncanonical* books, but only the *canonical* books of the Old and New Testaments.

### C. Implications of the Bible Being Covenantal Revelation:

1. As covenantal revelation, the Bible is designed to help us know God and to relate to him rightly, according to his terms. The Bible is not about laws but about life and relationship, not about burden but about blessing in relation to God.
2. As covenantal revelation, a proper handling of Scripture should nurture humility and a life of surrender before the Creator God.
3. As covenantal revelation, the Bible is by nature **authoritative**—accurate in all it affirms and the final appeal for faith, practice, and understanding reality correctly.
  - Westminster Confession of Faith 1646 (Article One, Paragraph Eight). The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic (Matt. 5:18); so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them (Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46).
  - Keach’s Catechism (1689). Question 4: What is the Word of God? Answer: The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, being given by divine inspiration, are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Isa. 8:20).
  - The Lausanne Covenant (1974) Article Two. We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God’s word to accomplish his purpose of salvation.

The message of the Bible is addressed to all mankind. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; John 10:35; Isa. 55:11; 1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; Matt. 5:17–18; Jude 3; Eph. 1:17–18; 3:10, 18).

- Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy 1978 (Summary Statement). 2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.... 4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
4. As covenantal revelation, the Bible is by nature **clear**, being written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read them in their literary context while seeking God's help and being willing to follow it.
- 2 Pet. 3:16. There are some things in [Paul's letters] that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.
  - 1 Cor. 2:14. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
- The Bible is sufficiently clear, but not everything in it is equally clear. It is sufficiently clear to allow us to grasp the portrait of God's supremacy and his overarching kingdom purposes climaxing in the saving work of Jesus, but some other elements in Scripture are less lucid. In his article titled "The Perspicuity of Scripture," Wayne Grudem helpfully notes that the Bible itself testifies that we can understand it but ...<sup>1</sup>
- a. Not all at once;
  - b. Not without effort;
  - c. Not without ordinary means;
  - d. Not without the reader's willingness to obey it;
  - e. Not without the help of the Holy Spirit;
  - f. Not without human misunderstanding;
  - g. Never completely.
5. As covenantal revelation, the Bible is **necessary** for having a relationship with God, for knowing his will, for understanding the Gospel, and for maintaining spiritual life (but Rom 1:19–21, 32 teach that it is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character or moral laws). More is needed than just the Bible (e.g., the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit), but no less. Only through the Bible can people be:
- a. Reborn in Christ (Psa. 119:93; Rom. 10:13–14, 17; Gal. 3:2; 1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18).
  - b. Empowered to holiness (Ps. 119:50; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:4).
  - c. Sustained to glory (Deut. 8:3; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:15).
  - d. Satisfied always (Ps. 1:2; 16:11; 1 Pet. 2:3).
6. As covenantal revelation, the Bible is **sufficient** at every point of redemptive history for supplying all the words of God that are needed for salvation, for

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, "The Perspicuity of Scripture," *Them* 34 (2009): 288–309.

trusting God perfectly, and for obeying God perfectly (2 Tim. 3:15–17; Psa. 119:1; 2 Pet. 1:3). Wayne Grudem (*Systematic Theology*, 130–35) notes that Scripture’s sufficiency implies that:

- a. Everything God wants us to know about how to think or what to do is given to us.
- b. We are not to add to Scripture or consider any other writings or teachings of equal weight to Scripture.
- c. God does not require us to believe anything about himself or his redemptive plan not found in Scripture.
- d. Nothing is sin that is not forbidden in Scripture either explicitly or implicitly.
- e. Nothing is required of us by God that is not commanded in Scripture either explicitly or implicitly.
- f. Our doctrinal and ethical teaching should emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and be content with what God has told us.

**D. Summary:** By referring to the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Bible as the *Old Testament* we point to its covenantal nature, which implies its authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency.

## II. Why Do We Call It the OLD Testament?

### A. Initial Ponderings?

1. Is it because it has nothing to say to us today?
2. Is it because we are “not under law (i.e., the OT), but under grace” (Rom. 6:14)?
3. Is it because “you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another” (Rom. 7:3)?
4. Is it because “the letter (i.e., the OT) kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor. 3:6)?

### B. Biblical Reflections

1. Recognizing how the old Mosaic covenant dominates the first part of Scripture whereas the new covenant in Christ dominates the second, the early church tagged each part *Testaments* (i.e., covenants) and distinguished them Old and New.
2. 2 Cor. 3:7–11. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses’ face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, <sup>8</sup> will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? <sup>9</sup> For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. <sup>10</sup> Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. <sup>11</sup> For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.
  - a. The new is far more glorious than the old, but the old is still glorious (3:7–11).
  - b. The new is written on hearts-of-flesh tablets; the old on stone tablets (3:3, 7).
  - c. The new involves a life-giving Spirit; the old a death-dealing written code (3:6).
  - d. The era of the new is a permanent dispensation of the Spirit (3:8) and of righteousness (3:9); the era of the old was a temporary (3:7, 11) dispensation of death (3:7) and condemnation (3:9).

“I argue that Paul conceived of the Mosaic covenant as ‘old’ in the sense that it is fundamentally non-eschatological in contrast to the eschatological nature of the new covenant. In other words, Paul declares that the Mosaic covenant is now old because it

belongs to the old age, while the new covenant is new because it belongs to the new eschatological age. The fact that the 'old' covenant belongs to the 'old' age has enormous implications for determining its character. The old age is transitory and impotent and therefore the Mosaic covenant is both temporary and ineffectual. It called for the right things like internalizing the law ('These things that I am commanding you today shall be upon your hearts' [Deut 6:6]; 'circumcise the foreskin of your hearts' [Deut 10:16]), but it lacked the power to create that for which it called. Therefore, Paul can say that 'the letter kills' (2 Cor 3:6)."

—Jason C. Meyer on his *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*

3. Gal 3:23–26. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
  - a. The Mosaic law covenant was an enslaving guardian (3:22–24).
  - b. This same covenant was temporary, lasting only until Christ came and inaugurated the age of faith (3:24–25).
  - c. Now that Christ has come, the old law has been set aside (3:25).
4. Heb 8:6–13 (citing Jer 31:31–34). But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup> For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. <sup>8</sup> For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>9</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. <sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>11</sup> And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. <sup>12</sup> For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." <sup>13</sup> In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.
  - a. By acting as a high priestly mediator through a *greater* tent (9:11) with *better* sacrifices (9:23), Christ establishes a *better* covenant (7:22) that is built on *better* promises (8:1) and a *better* word (12:24) that secure a *better* possession (10:34), *better* country (11:16), *greater* wealth (11:26), and *better* life (11:35).
  - b. Christ's coming inaugurates the new covenant which supersedes the old and makes it obsolete.

### C. **The Old Testament's *Foundational Role* in Scripture (i.e., some reasons why **OLD** must not mean unimportant or not applicable)**

1. The OT was Jesus' only Scripture, it makes up  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our Bible (75.55%), and all of Scripture is God's Word (2 Tim 3:16)!
2. The OT substantially influences our understanding of key biblical teachings. Can you think of any examples?
3. We meet the same God in both Testaments (Heb 1:3).
  - a. *Question:* But isn't the God of the OT one of wrath and burden, whereas the God of the NT is about grace and freedom?
    - Some OT texts: Exod 34:6; 2 Kgs 13:23; 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:17, 31
    - Some NT texts: Matt 10:28; 18:6; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:26–27

- b. *Answer:* In the whole Bible we meet one God who is faithful to his promises both to bless and to curse; he takes both sin and repentance seriously, and so should we!
4. The Pentateuch is filled with “good news/gospel” that is comparable to that received by the earliest Christians—good news still beneficial for us when united with faith (Gal 3:8; Heb 4:2, 6; cf. Rom 9:30–31; Jude 5).
  5. Jesus stressed that all the OT hangs on the call to love for God and neighbor (Matt 22:37–40), and we can learn much about love from the OT. What is most significant here is that this call to love God and neighbor is exactly what new covenant believers are to do. As Moses himself asserted, the very reason God promised to circumcise hearts in the new covenant age was “so that you will love the Lord your god with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut 30:6). Similarly, Paul says that you should “owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8). (For the relevance of the OT law for new covenant ethnic Israel, see Deut 30:6, 8; Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:27; for the same for new covenant adopted Gentiles, see Jer 12:16; Isa 2:2–3 // Mic 4:1–3; Isa 42:1–3).
  6. Jesus came not to abolish/destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them, most likely in the sense of prophetic fulfillment (Matt 5:17–18 with 11:12–14; Luke 10:24; 16:16–17; cf. Acts 15:10; Rom 10:4; Eph 2:15; 1 Tim 1:8–10; Heb 10:9).
  7. Jesus said that in every section of the OT there were pointers to him (his suffering and resurrection): “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27; cf. 24:44–48; John 5:39, 46–47). Paul’s Bible too was principally the OT, and he said the whole was about God’s kingdom and concerned Jesus (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; Rom 1:2–3).
  8. Failing to declare the “whole counsel of God” can put us in danger of God’s wrath. In Acts 20:26–27 he testifies to the Ephesian elders, “I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” The “*whole counsel of God*” refers to the entirety of God’s purposes in salvation-history as revealed in Scripture. Had the apostle failed to make known the Lord’s redemptive plan of blessing overcoming curse in the person of Jesus, he would have stood accountable before God for any future doctrinal or moral error that the Ephesian church carried out (cf. Ezek. 33:1–6; Acts 18:6).
  9. The NT authors stressed that the OT is *for Christians*. “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4; cf. 4:22–24). “Now these things happened to them [the wilderness generation] as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11; cf. Heb 6:18; see also Hos 12:4; 1 Tim 1:8–10). With this, the NT authors regularly used the OT as the basis for Christian exhortation (e.g., 1 Cor 9:8–12; Eph 6:2–3; 1 Tim 5:18; 1 Pet 1:14–16). The OT is able to make one “wise for salvation through faith in Messiah Jesus” (2 Tim 3:15). And because it is the word of an unchanging God, it is forever profitable “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that

the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16–17).

10. Paul commands pastors to preach the OT and so keep the church from apostasy (2 Tim 4:2).

**D. The *Old Testament’s* Fulfillment in the New Testament**

1. Not only does a house fall without a foundation, but also the completed house itself can assist us in understanding why the foundation was shaped the way it was. That is, a helpful tool for unraveling the overarching concerns of the Old Testament as *Christian* Scripture is grasping rightly how Jesus and the New Testament authors approached their Bible.
2. The Old Testament was written in the context of *progressive revelation*, and the Old Testament relates to the New Testament much like an apple seed relates to an apple tree. One is root, the other fruit; one is foundation, the other fulfillment, and the two inform one another. Out of this context, we are told that Old Testament saints like Moses, David, and Isaiah sowed a common seed of what would become “good news” and that they foretold of “the grace” that was to come. Nevertheless, they could only dream of the great tree of “salvation” that has now grown and begun to bear fruit through the person and work of Jesus (1 Peter 1:10–12; cf. Matt. 13:17; John 8:56). They all “died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar” (Heb. 11:13).
3. This organic connection between the Testaments means that the New Testament details the ultimate fulfillment of that for which the Old Testament saints were longing. This appears to be Jesus’ point in Matthew 5:17–18, which records: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass away until all is accomplished.” Similarly, “All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John [the Baptist], and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come” (Matt. 11:13–14; cf. Luke 16:16). In both of these texts, the first more broad and the second echoing the prophecy of Malachi 4:5, Jesus asserted that in himself the Old Testament was reaching its ultimate climax. There was a prophetic trajectory, and he was the fulfillment; all hopes found focus in him. In Paul’s words, “We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus” (Acts 13:32–33).
4. In a sense, then, the New Testament is portrayed like an answer key in the back of a math textbook; it provides clarity on the nature of the problem and a check to ensure we are rightly interpreting all the equation, which in this case is the Old Testament. With this in mind, an overview of the Old Testament message must interact with the New Testament at each stage to see whether we are on track.

**E. Summary:**

1. Question restated: Why then do we call it the *Old* Testament?
2. Answer: It’s not *old* in the sense of second class or unimportant, even though its grace was extrinsic and its covenant temporary. Rather it’s *old* in the sense that it provides the foundation for God’s redemptive plan and points to the fulfillment



found in Christ within the *new* covenant (Testament). God has spoken, and we must listen.

### III. The Old Testament's Rootedness in History (God's words *through human words*)?

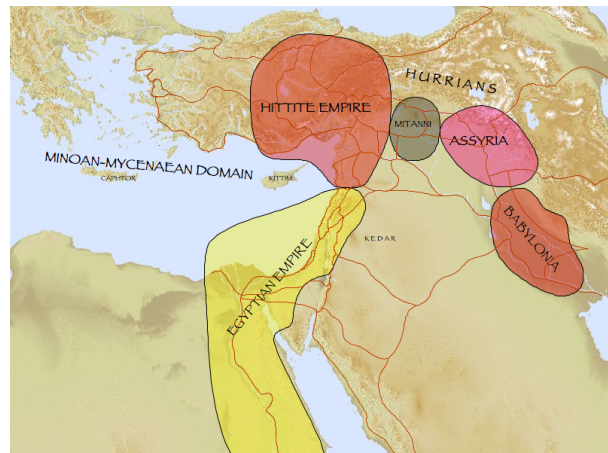
#### A. Human Authors

1. In a way somewhat parallel to the person of Jesus Christ, God's Word written is 100% divine and 100% human. Every word of Scripture is from God, but he spoke to the world through human authors, all of whom were conditioned by the language, culture, and situations of their day.
2. Through use of sources and under divine guidance, the Old Testament was formed over more than a thousand-year period (ca. 1450–400 B.C.), using a variety of genres to communicate God's words, including genealogies, court annals, prophetic oracles, proverbs, prayers, priestly instructions, and much more. This diversity, however, only adds flavor to the amazing unity of message and purpose evident throughout the whole. Indeed, like its 39 individual books (24 by Jewish numbering), the Old Testament as a whole shows signs of intentional shaping toward a common goal—a quality testifying to the guiding hand of the supreme author.

#### B. Historical-Geographical Context

1. *Ethnicity.* Abraham and his offspring were known as “Hebrews” (Gen. 14:3; 39:14, 17; 40:15; 41:12; 43:32; Exod. 1:15; etc.) and had their origin in northern Mesopotamia, likely in the region of Haran but perhaps further south near the Persian Gulf (Gen. 11:27–32; 15:7). The “Edomites” were Israel's cousins, descendants of Esau, Abraham's grandson and Isaac's son (Gen. 36), whereas the “Moabites and Ammonites” were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen. 19:36–38).
2. *Language.* The human authors most commonly wrote in Hebrew, a Canaanite dialect apparently adopted early after Israel settled in the Promised Land (Isa. 19:18). However, minor portions—specifically those dealing with Israel's relationship to Mesopotamia (esp. in Daniel and Ezra)—were written in Aramaic, the “common language” for international trade and diplomacy (see 2 Kgs. 18:26). Both Hebrew and Aramaic are “Semitic” languages, a title deriving from Noah's son *Shem*.
3. *Culture and worldview.* The Old Testament addressed an ancient context that was filled with perspectives, powers, and practices sometimes like but often unlike those of our western world. Not only this, biblical faith sometimes paralleled or adopted but more often repudiated the secular-pagan religious ideas and rituals that were part of the ancient Near East, the main center of ancient civilization (see below).
4. *Historical scope.* The Old Testament overviews God's perspective on and purposes in world history from creation to the initial stages of Israel's restoration after exile. During this period, five main empires dominated the world scene, each playing a key role in the developing biblical drama: Egypt, Israel, Assyria, Babylon, Persia.
  - a. Egypt (3000–1200 B.C.)
    - Abra(ha)m (2100)

- Joseph (1800)
- Moses (1400)
- b. Israel (1010–930 B.C.)
  - King David (1010–970)
  - King Solomon (970–930)
- c. Assyria (870–626 B.C.)
  - Divided Kingdom (930)
  - King Ahab (874–853) / Elijah the prophet
  - King Hezekiah (716–687) / Isaiah the prophet (740–700)
  - Israel exile (723)
- d. Babylon (626–539 B.C.)
  - Jeremiah the prophet (627–580)
  - Daniel the politician (605–570)
  - Ezekiel the prophet (593–570)
  - Judah exile / temple destroyed (586)
- e. Persia (539–323 B.C.)
  - Cyrus' decree and first return of exiles (538)
  - Haggai and Zechariah (520)
  - Temple rebuilt (516)
  - Esther (479)
  - Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi the prophet (430)

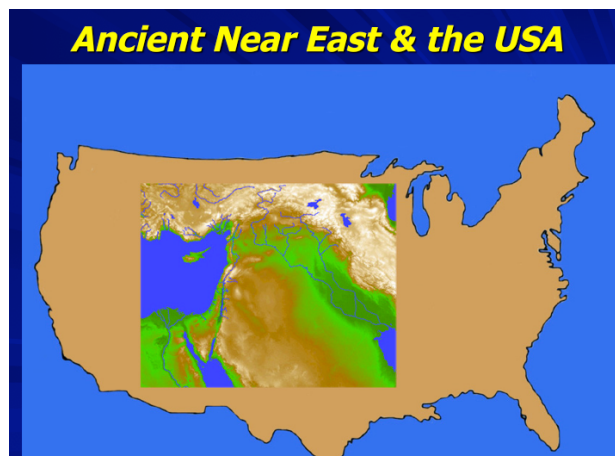


5. *An Overview of the Ancient Near East.* The historical-geographical context for OT and much of the NT was the **ancient Near East (ANE)**, the crossroads of continents (Europe, Asia, and Africa).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A portion of this discussion of the ancient Near East and some of the visuals are taken from lecture notes supplied by Dr. Boyd SeEVERS, University of Northwestern – St. Paul. I thank him for letting me use this material.



- a. The **Fertile Crescent** stretches from the Persian Gulf up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to the Mediterranean Sea, down the coast to Egypt, and down the Nile River.
  - i. It's bordered by mountains, deserts, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Persian Gulf.
  - ii. It's the part of the ANE that could sustain life, and therefore in it civilization grew.
  - iii. It marks the region where most people lived, traveled, traded, and fought.

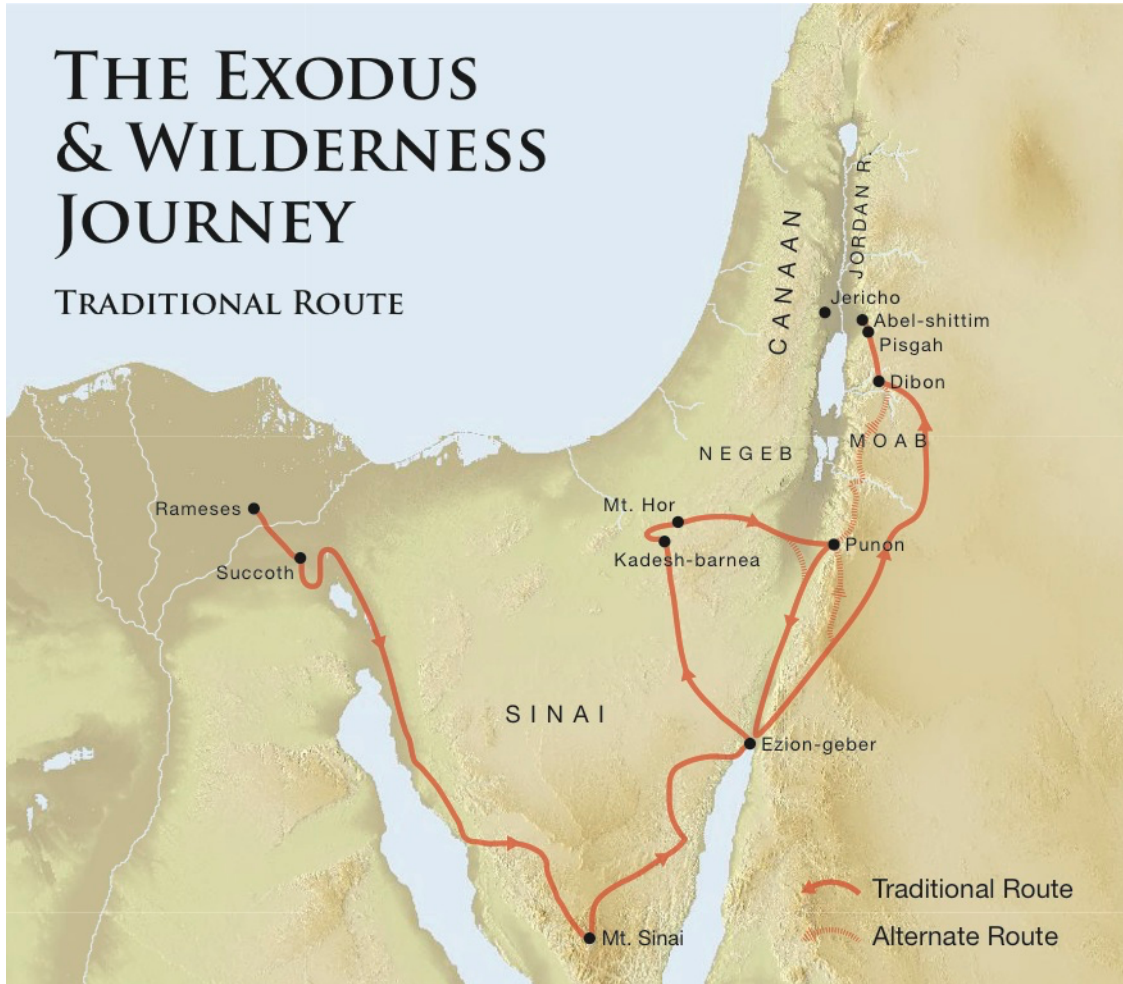


- b. The two great centers of ancient civilization were located in the Fertile Crescent:
  - i. Mesopotamia ("Between the Rivers")

- Earliest known culture—Sumer (ca. 3100 B.C.); invented writing.
- Home of ancient Assyria, Babylon, Persia (modern Iraq and Iran).
- Key Bible sites/events: Location of the Garden of Eden (?), the Tower of Babel, the origin of Abra(ha)m

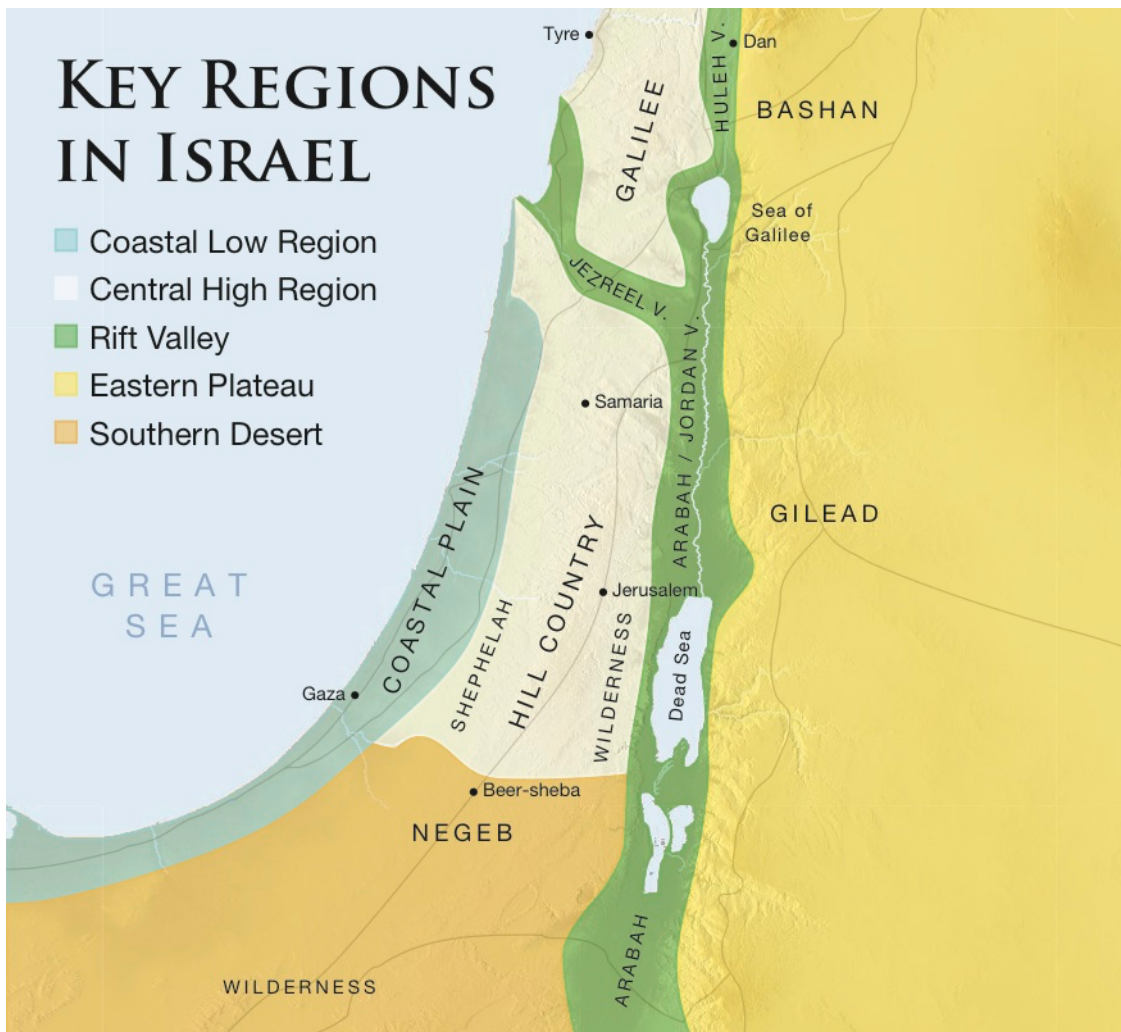


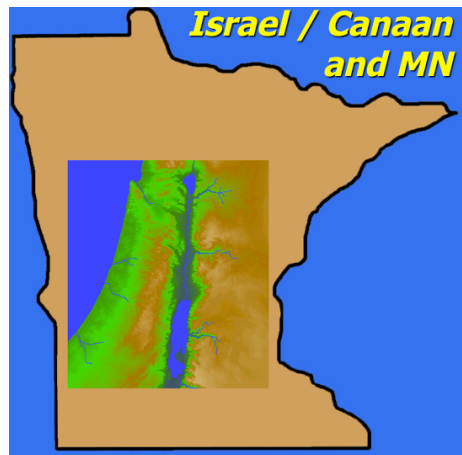
- ii. Egypt (“The gift of the Nile”)
  - 600 mile long river, which floods annually; fertile land for crops.
  - Three periods of greatness: Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms
  - Key Bible sites/events: Abraham and Jacob to Egypt during famine; Joseph as ruler over Egypt; site of the exodus.



6. *Israel as the “Land Between”*
- a. God intentionally stationed Israel/Canaan strategically between Mesopotamia and Egypt.
    - Ezek. 5:5–6. This is Jerusalem. I have set her in *the center of the nations*, with countries all around her. And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her.
    - Ezek. 38:12. [The people of Israel] dwell at *the center of the earth*.
    - Deut. 12:11. To the place that Yahweh your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you.
    - 1 Kgs. 8:41–43. Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name’s sake <sup>42</sup>(for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, <sup>43</sup>hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.
    - Psa. 132:13–14. For Yahweh has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place: <sup>14</sup>“This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.”
  - b. Israel appears to have been stationed in this “Land Between” as a picture and means of their mission to be a channel of blessing to the world.
    - Gen. 12:3. In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

- Exod. 19:5–6. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant and be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, then you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
  - Lev. 20:24, 26. <sup>24</sup>You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am Yahweh your God, who has separated you from the peoples.... <sup>26</sup>You shall be holy to me, for I Yahweh am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you shall be mine.
  - Deut. 4:5–8. <sup>5</sup>See, I have taught you statutes and rules.... <sup>6</sup>Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” <sup>7</sup>For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Yahweh our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? <sup>8</sup>And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today.
  - Ezek. 36:23. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am Yahweh, declares the Lord Yahweh, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.
- c. It was the place of travel, commerce, and conquest, and nearly all the peoples of the ancient world are mentioned in the OT because of the country’s central position.





#### IV. The Bible's Storyline: God's Kingdom through Covenant for His Glory in Christ

##### A. The 7 Stages of God's KINGDOM-Building Plan

Fig. 1.1. The Flow of the Bible's Story & the Redemptive-Historical Covenants

|                                      |   | Period  | Key Events   | Covenants   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Old Testament History<br>Foundation  | K | <b>Kickoff &amp; Rebellion:</b> Creation, fall, & flood<br>?-2100 B.C.  | Creation, fall, flood, Tower of Babel  | Adamic / Noahic<br>(with original creation)         |
|                                      | I | <b>Instrument of Blessing:</b> Patriarchs<br>2100-1850 B.C.   | Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, 12 sons ("tribes")  | Abrahamic<br>(with his offspring)                   |
|                                      | N | <b>Nation Redeemed &amp; Commissioned:</b><br>Exodus, Sinai, & wilderness<br>1450-1400 B.C.                               | 400 years of Egyptian slavery; exodus (ca. 1446);<br>Old Covenant at Sinai and wilderness wanderings;  | Mosaic<br>(with Israel)                             |
|                                      | G | <b>Government in the Land:</b> Conquest & kingdoms (united & divided)<br>1400-600 B.C.                                    | Conquest and period of the judges (ca. 1406-1050); King David (1010-970); kingdom divided (930); Assyria destroys northern kingdom of Israel (723); Babylon destroys southern kingdom of Judah (586)   | Davidic<br>(with his dynasty)                       |
|                                      | D | <b>Dispersion &amp; Return:</b> Exile & initial restoration<br>600-400 B.C.   | Judah exiled and Jerusalem destroyed (586); Cyrus' decree (539); first return to the Land (538); second temple rebuilt (516); second return under Ezra (458); third return under Nehemiah (444)  |   |
| New Testament History<br>Fulfillment | O | <b>Overlap of the Ages:</b> Christ's work & the Church age<br>4 B.C.-A.D. ?   | (400 years of silence;) Christ's first coming as suffering Servant (ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension); Pentecost and expansion of the church from Jerusalem to all Judea and Samaria to the end of the earth; gospel proclamation to Jew and Gentile through suffering and sharing | New<br>(with New Creation, Jew & Gentile in Christ) |
|                                      | M | <b>Mission Accomplished:</b> Christ's return & kingdom consummation<br>A.D. ?-eternity<br>"Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20) | Christ's second coming as conquering King: judging God's enemies, establishing righteousness on the earth, and restoring the people of God; new heavens and new earth in the presence of God for eternity  |   |

##### B. Jesus' Saving Work as the Fulcrum of the Bible

1. In fulfillment of the *Adamic/Noahic Covenant*, Jesus is the Son of Man, last Adam, and image of God (Mark 10:45; 14:62; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 4:4).
2. In fulfillment of the *Abrahamic Covenant*, Jesus is the offspring of Abraham and agent of universal blessing (Gen. 22:17b-18; Acts 3:25-26; Gal. 3:16).
3. In fulfillment of the *Mosaic (Old) Covenant*, Jesus represents Israel and stands as God's Son, Yahweh's Servant, the one who fulfilled the law's demands, and the substance of all covenant shadows (Exod. 4:22-23; Isa. 49:3, 5-6; Matt. 3:17; Acts 3:25-26; Rom. 5:19; Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:9-12; 10:1).
4. In fulfillment of the *Davidic Covenant*, Jesus is the King of the Jews and Son of David (Matt. 2:1; 21:9; Luke 1:32-33).
5. In fulfillment of the *New Covenant* promises, Jesus is the prophet like Moses who was to come and the only true mediator between God and man (Deut. 18:15, 18; Luke 7:16; 22:20; Acts 3:22-26; 7:37; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).



## V. The Arrangement of Jesus' Bible

A. **The Structure.** Jesus' Bible included three divisions: the Law (*tôrā*), the Prophets (*nēbî'im*), and the Writings (or "the *other* Scriptures," *kētûbîm*) (= TaNaK). The Law began with Genesis and the Writings opened with Psalms and ended with Chronicles. The twelve minor prophets are joined into a single unified book.

1. The Jews of Jesus' day sometimes abbreviated the structure of the Hebrew Scriptures by only mentioning the first two divisions: the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:16; 24:27; John 1:45; 1QS 1:2–3; 8:15–16; 4QMMT C.17)
  - 1QS 1:2–3. <sup>2</sup>... to do that which is good and upright before Him [i.e., God], just as <sup>3</sup>He commanded through Moses and all His servants the prophets....
  - 1QS 8:15–16. <sup>15</sup>This means the expounding of the Law, decreed by God through Moses for obedience, that being defined by what has been revealed for each age, <sup>16</sup>and by what the prophets have revealed by His holy spirit.
  - 4QMMT C.17. [It is also written in the book of] Moses and in the b[ooks of the prophet]s that [the blessings and curses] shall come [upon you...].
2. Other times they divided the sacred canon into three parts: the Law (*tôrā*), the Prophets (*nēbî'im*), and the Writings (or "the *other* Scriptures," *kētûbîm*) (= TaNaK; Luke 24:44–45).
  - Prologue to Sirach. <sup>1</sup>Many great teachings have been given to us through *the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them*, and for these we should praise Israel for instruction and wisdom. Now, those who read the scriptures must not only themselves understand them, <sup>5</sup>but must also as lovers of learning be able through the spoken and written word to help the outsiders. So my grandfather Jesus, who had devoted himself especially to the reading of *the Law and the Prophets* <sup>10</sup>and *the other books of our ancestors*, and had acquired considerable proficiency in them, was himself also led to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom, so that by becoming familiar also with his book those who love learning might make even greater progress in living according to the law. <sup>15</sup>You are invited therefore to read it with goodwill and attention, and to be indulgent in cases where, despite our diligent labor in translating, <sup>20</sup>we may seem to have rendered some phrases imperfectly. For what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense when translated into another language. Not only this book, but even *the Law itself, the Prophecies*, <sup>25</sup>and *the rest of the books* differ not a little when read in the original.
  - 4QMMT C.10–11. <sup>10</sup>We [have written] to you so that you might understand the book of Moses, the book[s] of the Pr[o]phets, and Davi[d...]. <sup>11</sup>[the events of] the generations.
3. Similarly, while Jesus could abbreviate his Hebrew Scriptures in to the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:16; 24:27; John 1:45), he could also speak of three parts: "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44–45).
 

NOTE: Because the Psalms is the first and largest book among most lists of the Writings, Jesus is probably using Psalms as shorthand for the whole.
4. Jesus' Bible most likely began with Genesis and ended with Chronicles (Luke 11:49–51; cf. Matt. 23:35).
  - Luke 11:49–51. <sup>49</sup>Therefore the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute," <sup>50</sup>so that the blood of the all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, <sup>51</sup>from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.

NOTE: This is not a summary of all prophets from "A to Z" (does not work in the biblical languages) nor is it a chronological assertion, for the last martyr of the OT age was Uriah the son of Shemaiah, who died furing the reign of

Jehoiakim (609–598 B.C.; Jer. 26:20–23). Rather, this appears to be a canonical statement, for the OT’s first martyr was Abel (Gen. 4:8), and the OT’s last martyr, if Chronicles is the final book, was Zechariah (2 Chr. 24:20–21).

5. By Jesus’ day, the twelve minor prophets were viewed as twelve parts of a single “book of the prophets.” This is highlighted in Stephen’s citation of Amos 5:25–27.
  - Acts 7:42. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in *the book of the prophets*: “Did you bring. . . .”

**Fig. 1.2. The Arrangement of Jesus’ Bible**

| English Classification & Arrangement |  | Hebrew Classification & Arrangement |  | Hebrew Names for the Books  | Approximate Dates Concerned (all B.C.)  |   |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| LAW                                  | Genesis<br>Exodus<br>Leviticus<br>Numbers<br>Deuteronomy     | LAW<br>( <i>tōrā</i> )              | Genesis<br>Exodus<br>Leviticus<br>Numbers<br>Deuteronomy | In the beginning<br>These are the names<br>And he called<br>In the wilderness<br>These are the words  | The Beginning to 1406   |   |
|                                      | HISTORY  |                                     | PROPHETS ( <i>nebí'im</i> )                              | Former  | Joshua<br>Judges<br>1–2 Samuel<br>1–2 Kings   | Joshua<br>Judges<br>1–2 Samuel<br>1–2 Kings   |
| Latter                               |  | The Twelve                          |  | Jeremiah<br>Ezekiel<br>Isaiah<br>Hosea<br>Joel<br>Amos<br>Obadiah<br>Jonah<br>Micah<br>Nahum<br>Habakkuk<br>Zephaniah<br>Haggai<br>Zechariah<br>Malachi | Jeremiah<br>Ezekiel<br>Isaiah<br>Hosea<br>Joel<br>Amos<br>Obadiah<br>Jonah<br>Micah<br>Nahum<br>Habakkuk<br>Zephaniah<br>Haggai<br>Zechariah<br>Malachi | 627–580<br>593–570<br>740–700<br>760–730<br>600 (?)<br>760<br>586 (?)<br>770<br>737–690<br>650<br>630<br>627<br>520<br>520–518<br>433 |
| POETRY & WISDOM                      | Job<br>Psalms<br>Proverbs<br>Ecclesiastes<br>Song of Solomon |                                     |  |   |   |   |
| PROPHETS                             | Major  | WRITINGS ( <i>ketúbim</i> )         | Former   | Ruth<br>Psalms<br>Job<br>Proverbs<br>Ecclesiastes<br>Song of Songs<br>Lamentations  | Ruth<br>Psalms<br>Job<br>Proverbs<br>The Assembler / Preacher<br>Song of Songs<br>How! / Alas!  | 1200–1150<br><br><br><br><br><br>No specific historical period covered<br><br>586   |
|                                      | Minor  |                                     | Latter   | Daniel<br>Esther<br>Ezra-Nehemiah<br>1–2 Chronicles   | Daniel<br>Esther<br>Ezra-Nehemiah<br>1–2 The words of the days  | 605–530<br>483–474<br>538–450 / 445–410<br>1010–970 / 970–538   |

Prepared by Jason S. DeRouchie and adapted from John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 12. The Hebrew ordering is from the Talmudic *baraita* in *Baba Bathra* 14b.

6. The structure of Jesus' Bible as witnessed to in the NT aligns with the most ancient complete listing of the order of books in the Jewish canon found in *Baba Bathra* 14b, a talmudic baraita coming from the Tannaim not included in the Mishnah and dating to around the time when the NT was being shaped (ca. A.D. 50). Assuming the fixed placement of the first five books of the Law, the list arranges in order the eight "Prophets" and the eleven "Writings" (see Fig. 1.2):
  - a. The Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
  - b. The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the Twelve
  - c. The Writings: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra[-Nehemiah], Chronicles

**B. The Significance.**

1. The Old Testament is controlled by the story of God's program of redemption, which is sketched in chronological order through the narrative books (the only exceptions being Ruth and Chronicles). The biblical narrative itself begins in the Law and continues through the Former Prophets and the Latter Writings, into the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. This (true) story clarifies God's perspective on how the peoples and events of space and time relate to his kingdom purposes, which move from original creation to new creation, from the old (cursed) world in Adam to the new (blessed) world in Christ. The main character in the redemptive drama is God, who stands supreme over all and who graciously set Israel apart to serve as the channel through which he would overcome the world's plague of sin and replace it with the blessing of salvation.
2. Jesus' Hebrew Scriptures addressed the nature, history, and purpose of God's relationship with Israel (i.e., the Old Covenant).
  - a. The Old *Testament* is about the old covenant, which was *established* in the Law, *enforced* in the Prophets, and *enjoyed* in the Writings. These Hebrew Scriptures provide the *foundational* for the *fulfillment* found in the work of Christ and the NT.
  - b. The Old Testament includes both the narrative retelling of the first stages of God's kingdom-building program (from creation to Israel's initial restoration after exile) and commentary on this story.

**Fig. 1.3. The Narrative–Commentary Structure of the OT**

|                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| <b>Law</b>      | Genesis–Deuteronomy narrate the true story of Adam and Eve’s experience in the Garden to the death of Moses and Israel’s readiness to enter the Promised Land.  | <i>Narrative of Redemptive Program</i>  |
| <b>Prophets</b> | Joshua–Kings (Former Prophets) then pick up at Moses’ death and narrate the conquest of Canaan to the destruction of Jerusalem and Babylonian exile; they describe <i>what happened</i> in Israel’s covenantal history.   | <i>Narrative of Redemptive Program</i>  |
|                 | Jeremiah–the Twelve (Latter Prophets) provide reflective prophetic commentary on Israel’s rebellion and need for divine mercy; they describe <i>why</i> Israel’s covenant history went the way it did.                    | <i>Commentary on Redemptive Program</i> |
| <b>Writings</b> | Ruth–Lamentations (Former Writings) clarify how the remnant survived in the Old Covenant, hoping in the coming kingdom and its Messiah.   | <i>Commentary on Redemptive Program</i> |
|                 | Daniel–Chronicles (Latter Writings) carry the narrative from the Babylonian exile to the reestablishment of God’s people in the land, all the while stressing Israel’s sustained part in God’s plan for a global kingdom. | <i>Narrative of Redemptive Program</i>  |

- The OT structure is intriguingly parallel with that of the NT, which also balances narrative of the redemptive program with commentary on it.

**Fig. 1.4. The Bible’s Covenantal Structure**

|                     | <b>Established</b><br><i>(God/Jesus as Savior)</i> | <b>Enforced</b><br><i>(God/Jesus as Sovereign)</i> |                   | <b>Enjoyed</b><br><i>(God/Jesus as Satisfier)</i> |                         |
|---------------------|--|--|-------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Old Covenant</b> | Law  | Former Prophets                                    | Latter Prophets   | Former Writings                                   | Latter Writings         |
| <b>New Covenant</b> | Gospels  | Acts   | General Epistles  | Pauline Epistles & Hebrews                        | Revelation <sup>3</sup> |
|                     | <i>Narrative</i>                                   | <i>Narrative</i>                                   | <i>Commentary</i> | <i>Commentary</i>                                 | <i>Narrative</i>        |

## VI. The Bible’s Frame, Form, Focus, & Fulcrum: A New Testament Perspective

### A. Definitions:

- Overarching Frame:** What? What is the message of the OT about? Is there an overarching context within which everything can be placed?
- Canonical Form:** How? By what structure does it come to us?
- Historical Focus:** Why? To what end are all God’s acts, including the revelation of Scripture? Why was the Bible written?
- Theological Fulcrum:** Whom? What is the center to which all redemptive history points and from which it finds fulfillment?

### B. Jesus perspective on the frame, form, focus, and fulcrum:

- The Frame and Focus:** Jesus’ entire mission (his person and work) was about *the kingdom of God, established through the new covenant for God’s glory*.
  - Jesus preached about the kingdom of God for the glory of his Father
    - Luke 4:43. I must preach *the good news of the kingdom of God* to the other towns as well; for *I was sent for this purpose* (cf. Matt 4:17, 23).
    - John 7:16–18. <sup>16</sup>My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. <sup>17</sup>If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am

<sup>3</sup> While Revelation is not strictly “narrative,” it does complete the storyline begun in the Old Testament and carried on in the Gospels and Acts. Furthermore, like Chronicles at the end of the Old Testament, which reviews all history from Adam to the initial restoration, Revelation at the end of the New Testament reviews redemptive history from the first coming of Christ into eternity.

- speaking on my own authority. <sup>18</sup>The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent me is true, and in him there is no falsehood.
- b. Jesus prayed for the kingdom to come (Luke 11:2; cf. Matt 6:10).
    - Luke 11:2. When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come....”
  - c. Jesus called his disciples to seek first the kingdom (Luke 12:31; cf. Matt 6:33).
    - Luke 12:31. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.
  - d. Jesus was the Davidic king who was to come whose kingdom would last forever (Luke 1:32–33; cf. Matt 1:1; 21:9).
    - Luke 1:32–33. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.
  - e. Jesus said God’s kingdom was his kingdom, inaugurated through “the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:17–20, 28–30; cf. Matt. 26:28; John 18:36).
    - Luke 22:17–18, 20, 28–30. <sup>17</sup>And [Jesus] took the cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup>For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.... <sup>20</sup>This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.... <sup>28</sup>You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup>and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup>that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
  - f. Jesus’ mission, climaxing in his death on the cross, was for the glory of his Father (John 12:27–28).
    - John 12:27–28. [Jesus prayed], “For this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have gloried it, and I will glorify it again.”
  - g. After his resurrection, Jesus continued to speak “of things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).
2. **The Form:** Jesus’ Hebrew Scriptures addressed the nature, history, and purpose of God’s relationship with Israel (i.e., the old covenant) and did so through three divisions: the Law (*tōrā*), the Prophets (*nēbî’im*), and the Writings (or “the *other* Scriptures,” *kēṭûbîm*) (= TaNaK). The Law began with Genesis and the Writings opened with Psalms and ended with Chronicles. Furthermore, the old covenant was *established* in the Law, *enforced* in the Prophets, and *enjoyed* in the Writings. These Hebrew Scriptures provided the *foundational* for the *fulfillment* found in the work of Christ and the NT.
  3. **The Fulcrum:** Jesus testified that *his person and authoritative, saving, and satisfying work* were the center to which all canonical revelation and redemptive history pointed and from which all Scripture and history gains significance.
    - a. Jesus came as the focus and prophetic fulfillment of all OT hopes (Matt. 5:17–18; 11:13–14).
      - Matt. 5:17–18. <sup>17</sup>Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup>For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
      - Matt. 11:13–14. <sup>13</sup>For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup>and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

- b. After his resurrection, Jesus asserted that every part of the OT contained “things concerning himself” that needed to be fulfilled (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46).
- Luke 24:25–27, 44. <sup>25</sup>And [Jesus] said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. . . . <sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”
  - John 5:39, 46. <sup>39</sup>You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. . . . <sup>46</sup>For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.
- c. After his resurrection, Jesus asserted the Christo-telic nature and missiological anticipation of the OT in order to ground his disciples’ universal mission (Luke 24:45–49; cf. Matt. 28:18–20).
- Luke 24:45–49. <sup>45</sup>Then [Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
- d. After his resurrection, Jesus presented himself to prove his universal authority and the efficacy of his saving and satisfying work and to ground the disciples’ universal kingdom mission (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:3, 8).
- Matt. 28:18–20. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
  - Acts 1:3, 8. <sup>3</sup>He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. . . . <sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? <sup>7</sup>He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- C. Paul and Peter’s perspectives on the frame, form, focus, and fulcrum:** Utilizing the entire OT, the apostles proclaimed God’s kingdom through covenant for God’s glory in Christ, and portrayed Jesus as the one through whom all OT hopes are fulfilled. They affirmed that the OT is both Christo-telic in nature and missiological in its anticipation (Acts 13:32–33; 19:8; 20:20–21, 25, 27; 28:23, 31; 1 Pet. 1:10–12).
- Acts 13:32–33. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, <sup>33</sup>this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus.
  - Acts 19:8. And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.
  - Acts 20:20–21, 25, 27. I did not shrink from . . . <sup>21</sup>testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . <sup>25</sup>I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom. . . . <sup>27</sup>I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.
  - Acts 28:23, 31. He expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. . . . <sup>31</sup>[And Paul was]

proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.”

- 1 Pet. 1:10–12. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about *the grace that was to be yours* searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup>inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted *the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories*. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

**Fig. 1.5. The Bible’s Frame, Form, Focus, & Fulcrum<sup>4</sup>**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Frame</b>   | God’s Kingdom (God reigns, saves, and satisfies)           |
| <b>Form</b>    | <i>through</i> Covenant (established, enforced, & enjoyed) |
| <b>Focus</b>   | <i>for</i> God’s Glory                                     |
| <b>Fulcrum</b> | <i>in</i> Christ (Sovereign, Savior, & Satisfier)          |

**Fig. 1.6. The Bible’s Structure & Message<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> I thank my friend and colleague Dr. Jason C. Meyer, who first presented to me the simple but profound multi-orbed synthesis of the Bible’s message as “God’s kingdom through covenant for his glory (What? How? Why?).”

<sup>5</sup> I thank my friend Dr. Miles V. Van Pelt, whose lectures and charts on Old Testament Biblical Theology at [www.biblicaltraining.org](http://www.biblicaltraining.org) initially sparked my vision for this diagram. I also thank my student Joel Dougherty for using his artistic and computer graphics skills to generate this image from my earlier draft.